AGM and Steering Group Meeting

9:30am, Wednesday 8 February 2023
Room P, Portcullis House

M I N U T E S

Attendees: Sir Gary Streeter MP (Chair), Baroness Brinton, Lord Farmer, Nick Fletcher MP, Emma Hardy MP, Ian Paisley MP, Baroness Sherlock, Mark Gilmore, Mark Harris, Alison Holloway, Claire Newman, Lachlan Rurlander *(7 Voting Members present)*

1. Prayers

- Revd Mark Harris opened the meeting in prayer.

2. Apologies

- Rt Revd Anthony Ball, Fiona Bruce MP, Marsha de Cordova MP, Lord Curry of Kirkharle, Tim Farron MP, Chris Loder MP, Rachael Maskell MP, Cat Smith MP, Lord Taylor of Warwick, Stephen Timms MP, Lord Weir of Ballyholme

3. Minutes of February 2022 AGM & Steering Group Meeting

- The minutes of the AGM and Steering Group Meeting on 1 February 2022 were approved.

4. Election of APPG Officers

- **Chair:** Sir Gary Streeter MP
- **Co-Chair:** Baroness Sherlock
- **Vice-Chairs:** Ian Blackford MP, Marsha de Cordova MP, Sir Jeffrey Donaldson MP, Tim Farron MP, Baroness Brinton, Lord Curry of Kirkharle, Lord Farmer
- All APPG officers were elected.

5. Approval of Income/Expenditure Statement

- Alison Holloway talked through the Income and Expenditure Statement for the APPG from January 2022 until December 2022.
- The Income and Expenditure Statement was approved.

6. Review of past year

- Weekly activities have continued, including: fellowship groups (two held at the House of Commons end, one held at the House of Lords end), Tuesday lunchtime chapel service, Thursday lunchtime prayer meeting for staff, and a weekly psalm reflection for Members and staff.
- Other events did not start until later in the year due to the aftermath of Covid-19.
- An Easter Celebration Service was held in April 2022 and was well attended by Members and staff.

- In November 2022, there was a Great Sacred Music: Messiah service of music and reflection in the Chapel of St Mary Undercroft. St Martin's Voices from St Martin-in-the-Fields sang movements from Handel's Messiah, interspersed with Bible readings and reflections from Revd Mark Harris.
- In December 2022, two Carol Services were held, one on a Monday evening and another on a Tuesday lunchtime.
- Two afternoon teas were held in May and November 2022 to provide an opportunity for cross-party Christian fellowship.
- A monthly political theology discussion course was held in the spring and summer, and in November 2022 there was an informal dinner and discussion for parliamentarians with Professor Robert Song form the University of Durham on the topic 'What difference does Christian faith make to politics?'
- The 2022 National Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast, chaired by Andrew Selous MP, took place in Westminster Hall once again after two years online. Revd Les Isaac spoke on the theme 'Serving the Common Good'. 670 people attended in person, including 180 Members and 40 delegates from the Freedom of Religion or Belief conference. The breakfast was livestreamed and since then it has had 15,000 views on YouTube. The livestream was much appreciated by those who were unable to attend in person.

7. Looking ahead

- There are a number of events planned for the next few months:
  - **Afternoon Tea (28 February 2023):** termly afternoon tea for parliamentarians held in the River Room, House of Lords.
  - **What has Christianity ever done for us? (6 March 2023):** a lecture and discussion with historian Tom Holland.
  - **What difference does Christian faith make to politics? The Christian understanding of humanity & the world (20 March 2023):** an informal dinner and discussion with Professor Robert Song from the University of Durham, following on from the success of the dinner in November 2022.
  - **Great Sacred Music: J S Bach St John Passion (28 March 2023):** a service of music and reflection in the Chapel of St Mary Undercroft with movements from Bach's St John Passion. Music will be led by St Martin's Voices from St Martin-in-the-Fields and Revd Mark Harris will give the reflections.
  - After Easter, there will be an Easter Celebration Service as part of the regular Tuesday lunchtime chapel services, and an evening event with journalist and presenter Dan Walker interviewed by Baroness Morgan of Cotes.

8. National Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast 2023

- The 2023 National Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast is taking place on Tuesday 27 June in Westminster Hall. It is chaired by Lord Curry of Kirkharle and the keynote speaker will be Dr Amy Orr-Ewing, honorary lecturer at the University of Aberdeen School of Divinity, who will address the theme 'The Power of Forgiveness in Public Life'.

9. AOB

- Sir Gary Streeter MP is standing down at the next General Election and so there will need to be a new Chair of the Christians in Parliament APPG. The new Chair will be elected at a future AGM or EGM and as per House rules will need to be an MP (although there can be a Peer as Co-Chair). Gary is currently meeting with the Vice-Chairs to discuss this and is very open to hearing others' thoughts as well.
- Thanks were expressed to the Christians in Parliament staff and to Sir Gary Streeter MP for his wonderful leadership.